

Message Text

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ACTION PM-04

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 ERDA-05 OES-06

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R 270724Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9006

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

CNO WASHDC

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

CINCPACFLT MAKALAPA HI

COMSEVENTHFLT

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 6942

SECDEF FOR ISA

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, MNUC, OCLR, AS

SUBJ: NUCLEAR POWERED WARSHIP VISITS

1. REQUEST FOR DIPLOMATIC CLEARANCE FOR POST-KANGAROO VISIT OF ENTERPRISE TO MELBOURNE AND LONG BEACH TO HOBART WAS MADE LAST WEEK PROMPTLY UPON RECEIPT OF INSTRUCTIONS TO DO SO.

2. SUBSEQUENT INFORMAL CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN AMBASSADOR AND PM AND BETWEEN EMBOFFS AND LOWER-LEVEL DEFENCE MINISTRY OFFICIALS INDICATE LIKELIHOOD WE WILL BE ASKED BY DEFMIN KILLEN TO SWITCH ENTERPRISE TO HOBART AND LONG BEACH TO MELBOURNE. SUGGEST CONSIDERATION OF SWITCH BE GIVEN NOW SO PROMPT ANSWER CAN BE PROVIDED IF ASKED. TIMING IS OF COURSE SHORT.

3. ON BASIS OF INTERNAL DEFMIN MEMORANDUM PROVIDED US
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EXPECT FOLLOWING REASONS TO BE CITED FOR SWITCH REQUEST:

- MELBOURNE ANCHORAGE IS LESS DESIRABLE THAN HOBART ANCHORAGE. DISTANCE TO TOWN PIERS WOULD BE ABOUT FIVE MILES VERSUS ONE MILE IN HOBART. HOBART ANCHORAGE IS MORE PROTECTED.

-FACILITIES FOR LOGISTICAL SUPPORT AND TRANSPORTING LIBERTY MEN WOULD BE QUESTIONABLE AT MELBOURNE AND VERY GOOD AT HOBART. STRIKE ALMOST CERTAIN AT MELBOURNE, DENYING ACCESS TO TUGS, PERSONNEL LAUNCHES AND LOGISTICAL SUPPLY VESSELS. RAN LAUNCHES NOT READILY AVAILABLE. ON THE OTHER HAND HOBART WOULD BE FULLY OPERATIVE AND EAGER TO PROVIDE ALL SERVICES. AMPLE FERRY SERVICE IS ASSURED FOR PERSONNEL AND SUPPLIES. TUGS WOULD BE AVAILABLE. ON 17 SEPTEMBER A MEETING OF MEMBERS OF UNIONS DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN BERTHING OPERATIONS AND PORT SERVICING OF VESSELS IN THE PORT OF HOBART NOTED GOA REPORT ON SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL VIOLATIONS OF U.S. NPW'S, DECLARED THEIR INTENTION NOT TO ENGAGE IN POLITICAL BANS OR STRIKES AND STATED THEY WERE PREPARED TO WELCOME U.S. NPW'S SUBJECT TO THE SAFEGUARDS. LABOR PREMIER AND HIS GOVERNMENT HAVE WHOLEHEARTEDLY WELCOMED ENTERPRISE VISIT AND ARE ACTIVELY LOBBYING FOR IT. AT SAME TIME THEY HAVE INDICATED A WELCOME FOR ANY OTHER NPW CONVENTIONAL SHIPS.

- MELBOURNE WILL BE VERY CONGESTED DURING MELBOURNE CUP WEEK-END. SITUATION IS REPORTED WORSE THAN LOUISVILLE DURING KENTUCKY DERBY. DESPITE GREATER SIZE OF MELBOURNE IT IS BELIEVED HOBART CAN PROVIDE BETTER LIBERTY DUE TO CONGESTION FACTOR AND BECAUSE HOBART IS LARGELY A TOURIST CENTER WHOSE BUSINESS IS SUFFERING BADLY BECAUSE OF RECESSION. A COORDINATING GROUP OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND CITIZENS IS ALREADY IN BEING IN HOBART PLANNING WAYS TO ASSIMILATE AND ENTERTAIN ENTERPRISE AND OTHER CREWS. TASMANIA IS ONLY AUSTRALIAN STATE WITH LEGALIZED GAMBLING CASINOS AND ATTENDANT ENTERTAINMENT. CRUISE SHIPS REGULARLY CALL THERE; BOTH QUEEN MARY AND QUEEN ELIZABETH HAVE PAID EXCURSION CALLS THERE IN PAST YEARS.

- LONG BEACH CAN BERTH AT STATION PIER IN MELBOURNE BUT PROBABLY WOULD HAVE TO ANCHOR ONE MILE OUT IN HOBART.

4. INTERNAL MEMORANDUM CONCLUDES:

QUOTE. AGAINST THE CRITERION OF THE LIKELIHOOD OF SUCCESSFUL VISITS - THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT DEPLOYMENT OF THE CONFIDENTIAL

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ENTERPRISE TO HOBART AND LONG BEACH TO STATION PIER IN MELBOURNE WOULD AFFORD THE LOWEST POSSIBLE RISK OF POLITICAL AND PHYSICAL DIFFICULTIES. IT WOULD ALSO SEEM LIKELY TO HAVE THE BEST POSSIBLE IMPACT ON PUBLIC (INCLUDING UNION) OPINION AND THUS FACILITATE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE OBJECTIVE OF GAINING ENTRY FOR NPW'S TO A MAJOR NUMBER OF AUSTRALIAN PORTS.

QUOTE. ALTERNATIVE DEPLOYMENT OF ENTERPRISE TO ANCHORAGE IN MELBOURNE AND LONG BEACH TO ANCHORAGE IN HOBART WOULD INTRO-

DUCE PHYSICAL DIFFICULTIES WHICH EVEN UNDER FAVOURABLE CIRCUMSTANCES COULD NOT NECESSARILY BE RESOLVED TO THE SATISFACTION OF EITHER THE VISITORS OR THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED. END QUOTE.

5. FYI. TASMANIA ELECTIONS ARE DUE WITHIN MONTHS AND IT IS BELIEVED FRASER GOVERNMENT BELIEVES FAILURE TO COOPERATE WITH PRESENT STATE GOVERNMENT IN SECURING ENTERPRISE MIGHT ADVERSELY CLOUD THE POLITICAL CLIMATE FOR LIBERALS IN TASMANIA. END FYI.

6. EMBASSY BELIEVES SITUATION CALLS FOR SWITCH OF ENTERPRISE AND LONG BEACH. ONLY POSSIBLE ADVERSERS FACTOR IS ABILITY OF HOBART AND TASMANIA TO TAKE CARE OF LIBERTY ADEQUATELY. WHAT WE ARE TALKING ABOUT HERE IS THE INCREMENTAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO NPW'S AND WE BELIEVE HOBART AND TASMANIA WILL MAKE OUTSTANDING EFFORT TO PROVE THEIR TOURIST CAPABILITIES ARE UP TO THE CHALLENGE.

7. WILL ADVISE WHEN OFFICIAL REQUEST FOR SWITCH IS RECEIVED.
HARGROVE

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